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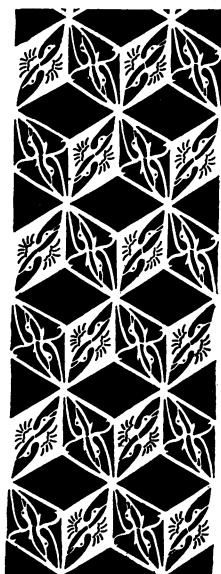
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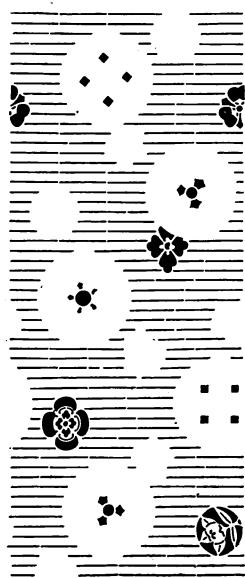
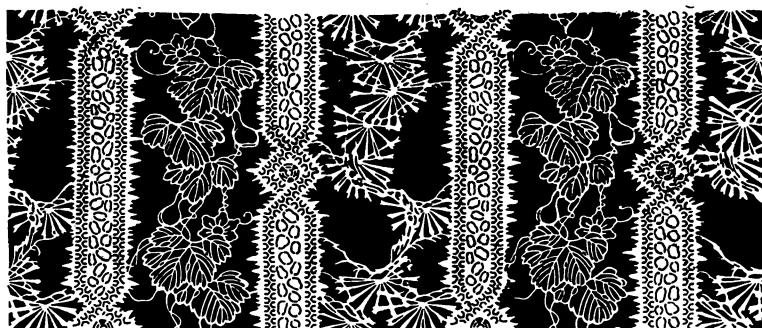
JAPANESE STENCILS, COLLECTION OF MR. H. DEAKIN

In attempting to write on a subject about which practically nothing has been written—especially when it happens to concern Japanese art—the history and process must necessarily be something of a conjecture; hence, I will not try to give any information on this part of the subject, for no amount of names, dates or descriptions of methods would alter the very patent fact that these Japanese stencils are of unusual beauty of design, and though the delicacy and accuracy of each outline and detail are something which in our day of mechanical processes have come to be looked upon as perfectly natural results—by machinery—here, however we have it all done by hand tooling, with that peculiar character about the work that bespeaks something vital behind the tool, that the brain which designed the pattern also executed the work of the stencil cutting.



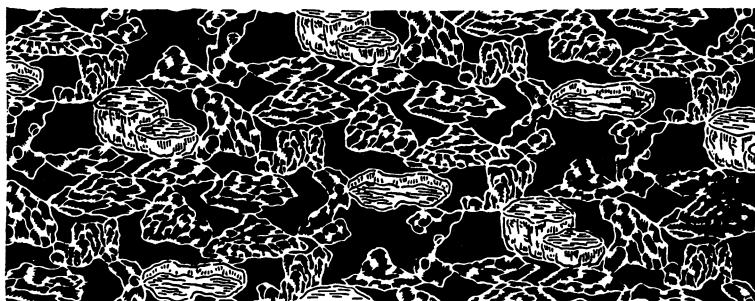
What is really known of these designs which belong to Mr. Deakin's beautiful collection of Japanese curios, is that many of them are the work of great artists of Japan, famous for work of a more lasting character.

It is gratifying to think that such men honored the art of design sufficiently as an art not to scorn the humble purpose to which these exquisite patterns have been put, for I am convinced that there are few artists of to-day successful in the fine art who would consider it worth while to put such painstaking labor into a design which might ultimately adorn the cotton facing



of some tapestry, and never be seen except when the "wrong side" was turned to view.

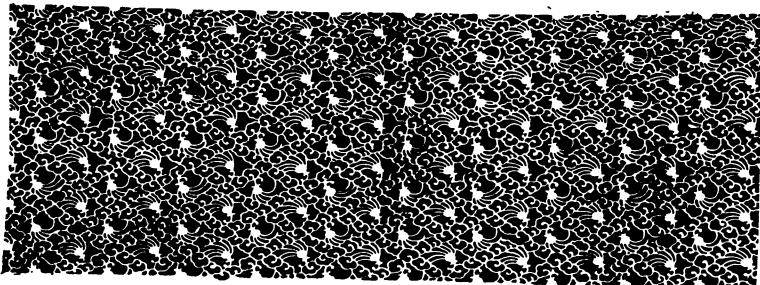
What possibilities of color arrangements are suggested by some of these designs! Cotton dresses would be an endless joy were they adorned with any of the two hundred and fifty designs of these stencils, and our silk fabrics, both for household and personal adornment, might become doubly attractive. There is a certain charm about the irregularity of hand-stenciled designs on fabrics, an effect which is not to be obtained by the mechanical processes unless reproduced directly from a hand-made proof—even then the pressure which is necessary to print the pattern by machine is almost sure to leave a sharpness that is unpleasant. Alas, that in the haste of this our day and generation, and of an entirely different civilization, we have neither time to produce nor encourage such artistic efforts in the field of applied arts, but must borrow





from what was done when art was the strongest impulse, and time and gain not cast so largely into the balance.

The flight of birds, from crested waves in which fishes leap—that peculiar live line of the incoming surf; the delicate bamboo in full leaf; butterflies in swarms, sometimes with the very freedom of nature, again conventionalized in every conceivable fanciful manner, and then the favorite theme, Buddha's sacred flower, the lotus.



One marvels at the ingenuity with which two birds with outstretched wings are fitted into a diamond-shaped space, and yet nothing of their true character seems to be lost. In the same stencil the design is alternately varied so as to make light and dark masses and relieve any possible monotony by reason of repetition. It is always from the familiar things in nature their inspiration seems to be drawn, and it only goes to prove that one need not see nature through dead men's eyes to produce an immortal work of art, but that the more intimate one is with nature's works the larger will be one's store of what people are pleased to term imagination—but which

after all is only the form and thought—develops upon such suggestion as nature is ever silently offering us out of her boundless store—suggestions never ceasing until we cease to care to see.

B. OSTERTAG.



THE SONG OF THE LARK

(ART INSTITUTE, CHICAGO)



Dear maiden, with uplifted face
And eyes in joyous reverence raised,
Far o'er the realms of song-thrilled space
Thy soul soars upward with the lark.

Thy rugged hand a sickle holds—
Death's symbol clasped by dawning life—
A rosy light thy form enfolds,
A new, earth-born Aurora thou.

Thy spirit is not peasant born,
Though night's pale dew clings round thy
feet;
Forever on thee shines the morn,
Still in thy heart life's matin rings.

AVILDA KILTON LEE.